

# News

from the Illinois Commerce

Commission

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## **ICC Resolution Commemorates Anniversary of Grade Crossing Protection Fund**

The Illinois Commerce Commission today approved a resolution commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Grade Crossing Protection Fund and more than 80 years of continuous efforts to enhance railroad safety in Illinois.

The General Assembly created the Grade Crossing Protection Fund in 1955, to assist local communities and railroads with the cost of safety improvements at highway-rail grade crossings and bridges. The ICC administers the fund and has authorized spending more than \$500 million for local rail safety projects throughout the state since 1955.

Commissioner Erin O'Connell, chairman of the ICC's Transportation Policy Committee, noted that since the inception of the fund, virtually every grade crossing with automated warning lights or gates has benefited from funding assistance and safety has improved significantly.

"Train-vehicle collisions are down 77 percent and fatalities have dropped by 84 percent," she said. "I believe we still have important work to do, but when we take a moment to look back, we can see significant improvement in public safety."

Illinois is second only to Texas in the total number of railroad crossings with approximately 11,000 public rail-highway crossings.

The Commission is responsible for reviewing grade crossing improvement proposals and approving the allocation of money from the fund for the work. ICC staff work with local governments, railroads and the Illinois Department of Transportation in the design and scheduling of grade crossing projects. Projects may range from railroad grade separations such as bridges to new signage, gates, flashing lights or other types of warning devices at railroad crossings.

The Illinois Commerce Commission is the successor of the Railroad and Warehouse Commission, which was established by the General Assembly in 1871. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the General Assembly replaced the three-member Railroad and Warehouse Commission with a new five-member Public Utilities Commission which ultimately became known as the Illinois Commerce Commission.

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